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**Natural Resources, Ecology &  
Parks Committee**

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**HB 1985**

**Brief Description:** Establishing the future of Washington forests review council.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Buck and B. Sullivan.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates the Future of Washington Forests Review Council to gather data on the various contributions of the forest products industry and developing recommendations for policy changes that will contribute to the maintenance of economic stability and growth in the forest products industry.

**Hearing Date:** 2/18/05

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

There are basically four categories of forest land owners in Washington: Tribes, the Federal government, the state government, and private landowners. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages most of the state's forest landholdings, while the U.S. Forest Service manages the majority of the federal acreage in Washington. Tribes and private landowners are directly responsible for the management of their own lands. Of these owners, the state government and private landowners must follow the Forest Practice Rules and the requirements of what is known as the "Forests and Fish" law.

In 1990, the Legislature commissioned the University of Washington to study the possible future of the timber supply situation in the state. The study included the two broad objectives of identifying the potential range of future timber harvest in Washington and translating harvest and inventory projections into prospective impacts on key economic and environmental quality measures. This report, known as the 1992 Timber Supply Study, has not been officially updated. However, since 1992, there has been various other state-funded reports and studies that have looked at the state's forests under a number of different filters. These processes have included studies by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee and environmental impact statements for various new state regulations.

**Summary of Bill:**

### Council created

The "Future of Washington Forests Review Council" (Council) is created. The Council is composed of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Commissioner of Public Lands, and staffed by the Office of Financial Management, the DNR, and the Governor's Office.

### Purpose of Council

The Council's purpose is to gather the data necessary to understand the contributions of the forest products industry in relation to the economy, the environment, and recreation in Washington, as well the trends that will influence the industry into the future. In addition, the Council is charged with developing recommendations for policy changes that will contribute to the maintenance of economic stability and growth in the forest products industry.

### Council's required final product

To fulfill its purpose, the Council must summarize the current and potential roles of non-federal forests in Washington, and their contributions to the state's economy, quality of life, recreation, environmental quality, and rural vitality over the coming 50 years. The Council must then use this information to develop recommendations for policy changes that will:

- Enhance the competitive position of the forest products industry within the state;
- Ensure that a productive forest land base continues to be managed for multiple uses; and
- Enhance the recreational opportunities on working forest land.

The Council may form technical advisory committees to assist it with the completion of its tasks.

### Reports required to be commissioned by the Council

The recommendations put forth by the Council must be based on the results of studies and assessments commissioned by the Council. These studies must include an update of a 1992 timber supply study conducted by the University of Washington, an independent assessment of the economic contributions of the forest products industry, and a comparison of Washington's forest products industry with those of other leading states or regions in the United States. The latter study must compare Washington with other state and regions based on factors such as tax burden, cost of regulations, and other competitive comparisons.

**Appropriation:** \$100,000 is appropriated from the general fund for both fiscal year 2006 and 2007.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.